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Building in Vilnius

## DO NOT CIRCULATE

- As far as the construction of new buildings in Lithuania is concerned, the interests of the Soviets are concentrated mainly on Vilnius. A plan for the reconstruction of Vilnius is being put into effect, and quite a lot has already been done. Many destroyed buildings, including factories, have been repaired and new ones built. Generally speaking, where houses of no architectural value have been destroyed, they are not being replaced, but the ground is being cleared and squares and parks laid out on the sites. Trees about thirty years old are being planted in these parks to give an atmosphere of maturity. Streets in the town are baing widened and levelled. Where necessary, one side of the street is demolished to allow for widening. The plans and their execution are on a scale such as could never have been put into effect in independent Lithuanian times. New buildings are, as a rule, made to fit into the style of the town and are acceptable from the aesthetic viewpoint.
- The new railway station in Vilnius is very modern, convenient, large, and impressive. A large square has been constructed in front of the station, with a statue of Stalin in the center. The interior of the station is sumptuous and has been decorated in pseudo-Lithuanian folk style.
- The old Zaliasis (Green) Bridge in Vilnius is no longer in existence. In its place a very large and broad bridge, which is approximately 80 feet in width and is of reinforced contrete on granite pillars has been constructed. The sides are also of granite. The bridge has not been completely finished, as the decorative statues have still to be installed. The bridge is fine and attractive and has, undoubtedly, been constructed for strategic purposes.

Building in Kaunas

Building in Kaunas can be said to be on a very slight scale. Whereas in

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independent times over 300 houses were built in Kaunas during the season (sic), at the present time no more than a few dozen are built. Almost everything that was damaged has been repaired, but Kaunas displays no tendency to expand or to change its external appearance.

## Roads

- 5. The basic network of roads in Lithuania has not been changed and no highways of note are being built. The surfaces of highways have remained much the same as they were before the war. The maintenance of highways is probably worse than before the war. In the time of independent Lithuania, highway surfaces were renewed every three years, but this is not now being done. At present, the highways are merely covered with gravel occasionally and any ruts or breaks in the road surface simply filled with gravel.
- 6. The type of transport has changed to some extent, and there is less horse-drawn and more motor traffic, but the roads are not being specially adapted to take this change. Since motor traffic damages road surfaces more rapidly and the surfaces are not fundamentally repaired, they continue to deteriorate, with the result that, on the whole, they fall far short of Western standards.

## Railways

- 7. Communication by rail is now quite well regulated and cannot be compared with that of 1946-1947. The railways operate satisfactorily, trains run on time, and there are diesel express trains in operation.
- 8. There are no new railways under construction in Lithuania, nor, apparently, are any planned. This is believed to be due to the fact that the railway network in Lithuania is somewhat more closely knit than that of the USSR, and consequently the Soviet Government evidently considers it adequate and is making no efforts at improvement.

## Buses

9. Transport within the towns is in good order. Bus services operate in Vilnius and Kaunas. The buses are always well filled, and packed during the rush hours. There are often lines of people waiting for the buses, but the lines are not very orderly.

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